

JIM THORPE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 10, 2021
MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 6:31 p.m. by President Gregory Strubinger with the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence for Councilman Tom Highland and his family, and the men and women serving our country and our first responders.

Roll Call of Members

Gregory Strubinger	Thomas Highland - absent	Joanne Klitsch
Jay Miller	Kyle Sheckler	Michael Yeastedt
Robert Schaninger – arrived 7:37pm		Mayor Michael Sofranko
Solicitor Nanovic	Connor Rodgers, JCP	Police Chief Schatz
Public Service Manager Yaich	Manager Sterner	Borough Engineer – absent
Secretary Louise McClafferty - absent		

Resolution 2020-11

Council President Strubinger announced that Junior Council Person (JCP) Connor Rodgers is graduating high school and will be off to college. He will be relinquishing his seat as JCP. President Strubinger highlighted many of Connor's accomplishments with the Borough as JCP, at Jim Thorpe Area High School and in the borough generally. He thanked Connor for all he has done for the community, commended him on his achievements and congratulated him on his graduation tomorrow. President Strubinger read Resolution 2020-11, honoring Junior Council Person Connor Rodgers.

Brad Hurley from Senator Yudichak's office honored Connor for all of his accomplishments, personally knowing Connor from a young age. He read a Proclamation honoring Connor from Senator Yudichak and the Pennsylvania Senate, and congratulated Connor on his achievements.

Timm Berger from Representative Heffley's office congratulated Connor. He read a Certificate of Recognition from Representative Heffley and the Pennsylvania House of Representatives honoring Connor.

The Resolution, Proclamation and Certificate of Recognition were presented to Junior Council Person Connor Rodgers.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to adopt **Resolution 2021-11**, to honor, recognize and thank Junior Council Person Connor Rodgers. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

JCP Rodgers addressed council. He said it has been an honor and privilege to serve in this position. He has gained a new appreciation for those men and women who serve on governing bodies. Connor said he can see why very few people run for council; that it takes a big-time commitment, passion and persistence. He further said you're never going to please everyone; it's easy to see the passion this council has for the town. While he hasn't always agreed with their decisions, he could see they always make their decisions with the best interest of the borough in mind.

Connor thanked Borough Council, the Mayor, and the borough management for their assistance and guidance during his tenure. Connor also thanked neighbor Bill Malatak, who he called his mentor. Bill brought Connor to many council meetings and supported him in many ways. Connor said he didn't always agree with him, but without him I probably wouldn't have been Junior Council Person.

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Mayor's Report

Mayor Sofranko stated the police report has been distributed – there were no comments from council; commented on and thanked the Borough Manager, Chief, Brad Hurley of Senator Yudichak's office and Timm Berger of Representative Heffley's offices for all of their hard work on securing grants for the borough; reported on police vehicle damaged; recognized Shawn Kresge for coming through for us in repairing the police department air conditioning; reported on a status of insurance claim and a new car; civil service list is in need of updating and should be before council next month.

Announcements

Tire & Electronic Recycling – President Strubinger reported another successful event.

Local Share Assessment Grant for \$60,095.00 for police car and equipment was awarded.

Local Share Assessment Grant for \$32,000.00 for fire station repairs was awarded.

Blight Remediation Grant for \$300,000.00 was awarded for a joint pilot program with Lehighton and Palmerton Boroughs.

Council President Strubinger gave an update on the Short-term Rental properties stating he is a little disappointed in the owners. The borough had worked to help them. They had 90 days to submit their applications. To date, only 42 have been received. The zoning company has made arrangements for an additional zoning officer to assist with the applications. Applications are due by June 16, 2021. Zoning will be prepared to begin the Notice of Violation process on June 17.

SALDO – none.

Public Comment

Michael Rivkin spoke on behalf of Jim Thorpe Tourism Agency and updated council on their event schedule which will include fall festival, Christmas and winter festival. St. Pat's festivities have not yet been decided. They are not intending to do any parking/shuttle at Mauch Chunk Lake Park but Sam Miller Field will have parking and the newly formed Jim Thorpe Trolley should be operating very soon.

Pete Bott commented on the reservoir; informed council they had a meeting at the Mauch Chunk Rod & Gun Club and they are offering to retain stewardship of the property, will rent it for \$1.00 per year to keep the property the way it is.

Jerry Kmetz commented on the reservoir; they want to work with the borough no matter how the decision on the land goes.

Ernie and Dianne Brummell stated they were present to discuss their request for the borough to vacate a portion of Quarry St.

Vince Rodgers, Connor Rodgers' father, thanked council for guiding his son through his Junior Council Person position. He stated Connor took this very seriously.

Action

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, seconded by Kyle Sheckler to approve the meeting **minutes of May 6, 2021**. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Kyle Sheckler to approve the meeting **minutes of May 13, 2021**. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

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MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, seconded by Kyle Sheckler to approve the meeting **minutes of May 27, 2021**. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve the **expenditures** from all Funds as presented. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve the **Treasurer's Report** for May, 2021. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve the **COVID-19 Disaster Declaration extension** to September 20, 2021. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Jay Miller, seconded by Mike Yeastedt to approve the **Family Medical Leave Policy** for all non-union, full-time employees. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Jay Miller to approve **Louise McClafferty's request to utilize her remaining paid leave time**, which will expire approximately July 6, 2021. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, seconded by Mike Yeastedt to approve an application to DEP for a **Growing Greener Grant for dam work and stream restoration** to include a letter of support and pledge of in-kind services in the amount of \$5,000.00. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOITON by Jay Miller, seconded by Mike Yeasted to approve **Multi-Modal Grant applications to DCED/CFA and to PennDOT for traffic calming and ADA curb cuts in the downtown area**, specifics to be developed by the parking study committee, and to pledge in-kind funds up to \$15,000.00 for the applications, depending on the project totals. There were no comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Jay Miller, seconded by Mike Yeasted to approve **American Recovery Funds proposed projects of High Street water main & laterals and the 500 block of South Street sewer main & lateral** (with matching capital reserve monies), if funds allow. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Jay Miller, seconded by Mike Yeastedt to approve the proposed **settlement on Insurance Claim TNT-0159103**. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Jay Miller, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve an agreement with **Express Employment** for temporary staffing purposes. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve the **Hill Road-West Broadway swale repairs**. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve the purchase of a **flatbed trailer**. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

Quarry Street – request for borough to vacate. This portion of the street was never opened; we cannot sell it because it is not a parcel, but part of the road system; we can only vacate it. An easement for access to the High Street Wall could probably be a requirement. If the two deeds from the two adjoining properties have adequate descriptions, a survey may not be needed. MOTION by Jay Miller, seconded by Mike Yeastedt to indicate to the adjoining property owners that council would be amenable to begin the process to vacate this unopened portion of Quarry Street. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

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MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, seconded by Kyle Sheckler not to move forward with the **Game Commission Agreement**. Councilman Miller stated he believes there are benefits to the agreement, but if council doesn't want to do this, he is agreeable. But he requested it be on the record that he believes the benefits outweigh the negatives. After comments, motion amended by Joanne Klitsch, and amendment seconded by Kyle Sheckler to instruct the Borough Manager to hold the agreement. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, seconded by Mike Yeastedt to approve the **Switchback Scamper** for October 24, 2021. There were no comments. Motion carried 5 to 0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve a **police contract for the Switchback Scamper**. After comments, motion carried 5 to 0.

Councilman Schaninger arrived at 7:37 pm.

After discussion on vendor permits and exemptions to the fees and/or permits for veterans and certain non-profits, MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Kyle Sheckler to approve the **Mauch Chunk Pow-Wow** for September 11 and 12, 2021 and to follow the current fee schedule for vendor permits. Motion carried 5 to 1 with Bob Schaninger voting no.

After discussion on route, MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve the **JT Lions Halloween Parade** for October 23, 2021. There were no comments. Motion carried 6 to 0.

Utility Action

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded by Joanne Klitsch to approve the garbage only lien report. There were no comments. Motion carried 6 to 0.

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, seconded by Mike Yeastedt to approve the water/sewer/garbage lien report. There were no comments. Motion carried 6 to 0.

Exoneration Request

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, seconded by Mike Yeastedt to approve the May exoneration requests report. There were no comments. Motion carried 6 to 0.

Committees

Administration

STR Update – see public comment.

Public Services (Sewer/Sanitation/Water/Streets)

Curb regulations – MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, seconded to Jay Miller to forward proposed updated to the streets and sidewalk ordinance for curb regulations to the Solicitor for drafting an amendment. After comments, motion carried 6 to 0.

Police

Mayor Sofranko commented on concerns from visiting fire police regarding the parking on Church Alley, they had difficulty maneuvering their vehicles on the road. Chief Schatz stated that he and Chief Yaich are already working on this. Councilman Yeastedt believes we should review all areas of town.

Buildings/Parks – n/a

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Emergency Services

Mike Yeastedt reported that the new fire trucks are scheduled to be delivered in December. Jay Miller stated we need to transfer titles back to the fire companies so they can complete sales of the vehicles.

Mike Yeastedt reported the fire relief associations merger is close to completion; they are proposing a member of the borough's emergency service committee, who is not an officer of the relief association, be appointed to the committee so there is an odd number of members; the newly formed association needs to vote and approve updated bylaws prior to the appointment by borough council.

Old Business

Permit Parking – updated draft was forwarded to the committee; awaiting comments.

Act 457 Plan – council requested the borough manager ask employees if they are interested in this type of employee only funded plan.

Executive Session

Litigation – will be held after this meeting.

Adjourn

MOTION: Mike Yeastedt, second by Jay Miller to adjourn and go into an executive session for litigation. Motion carried 6 to 0.

The meeting ended at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sterner
Borough Manager